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President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 23

Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Note of the Secretary-General (A/59/174)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.4)

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General (A/59/174) transmitting the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).

First of all, I would like to thank the Committee for having drafted this exhaustive report, which presents in detail the progress achieved over the past five years in the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I would like also to commend the excellent work done over the last two years by the working group set up by the Committee to produce the report that its Chairman will be introducing shortly in detailed form.

UNISPACE III, held in Vienna in 1999, led to the unanimous adoption of a text entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly by its resolution 54/68. The Vienna Declaration presented a strategy for making outer space the basis for the main United Nations initiatives to confront global challenges — in particular poverty, environmental deterioration, natural disasters, health and education — through the application of outer space science and technology.

The Vienna Declaration calls for the adoption of measures supporting global and regional development programmes, with a view to increasing the benefits of those programmes for the whole of society. In the realm of disaster management, for example, I note that the joint initiative taken by space agencies under the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters has made it easier to provide immediate assistance in the case of a major natural or technological disaster.

To date, five space agencies have placed their space infrastructures at the disposal of civil protection authorities tasked with intervening in case of major disasters, by providing them free of charge and in a timely way with satellite images to support their emergency operations. Since the Charter entered into force in November 2000, it has been activated more than 50 times in response to the devastating effects of floods, landslides, earthquakes and other natural disasters, most of which have occurred in developing countries.

It is also my pleasure to note that the Office for Outer Space Affairs has a remote operational assistance service, available 24 hours a day, seven days

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a week, thanks to which the competent bodies of the United Nations system can activate the Charter on Space and Major Disasters in order to obtain satellite images that they need for their rescue operations.

In the realm of remote medical care by means of space technologies, I note, for example, the progress achieved in establishing an inter-American network for using geographical information systems and remote sensing to combat infectious diseases.

Meeting Africa's particular needs remains one of the high priorities of the work of the United Nations. In that regard, I note with satisfaction the numerous projects mentioned in the report that are designed to support sustainable development in the continent that needs it most.

The measures taken with a view to implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III should not be seen as isolated initiatives. Indeed, the report before us gives us the opportunity of creating synergies between, on the one hand, the implementation of those recommendations and, on the other hand, the achievement of the Goals set out in the Millennium Declaration, of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the World Summit on the Information Society. This comprehensive approach makes it possible to achieve a worldwide consensus on the Development Goals and promotes global cooperation in honouring the commitments undertaken internationally.

From this broader standpoint, it is now the task of the General Assembly to evaluate the progress achieved over the last five years in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and to recommend the road to follow.

I understand that the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Mr. Adigun Ade Abiodun, has undertaken consultations with interested representatives on the draft resolution submitted under this item of the agenda (A/59/L.4).

I now call on Mr. Abiodun to introduce the Committee's report.

Mr. Abiodun (Nigeria) (Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space): Let me begin by thanking the General Assembly for giving me this opportunity to address it this morning on behalf of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and to present the report of the Committee on the implementation of the recommendations of the third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).

Five years have passed since the Secretary-General urged us not to allow the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development to be simply words, but to make it into a living force that will change the lives of future generations. I am very pleased to present this morning what has been achieved in undertaking the actions called for in the Vienna Declaration and what we propose to do in the coming years to make the Declaration a true living force to enhance human development around the world.

The Vienna Declaration contains a strategy to address global challenges through the use of space science and technology and their applications. Key actions called for by the Vienna Declaration cover such areas as protecting the Earth's environment and managing its resources, using space applications for human security, development and welfare, advancing scientific knowledge of space, enhancing education and training opportunities and strengthening space activities in the United Nations system.

Through the unique mechanisms that it adopted, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has played a central role in coordinating the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III at the global level. The action teams established by the Committee to implement those recommendations that Member States had through a survey identified as a priority proved to be a unique and flexible mechanism. The action teams — which were under the voluntary leadership of Governments and open to participation by any and all interested Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations — made significant progress throughout the year without relying too much on the resources available to the Secretariat.

The structure of the agendas of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, as revised by the Committee itself, facilitated the process of introducing new subjects to be examined by those bodies as part of their agendas following UNISPACE III. Since then, new agenda items have been considered under well-defined work plans or addressed as issues to be considered for one year only. In addition, the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, through their consideration of new agenda items, provided overall policy guidance to the work of many of the action teams.

The Committee was not alone in undertaking efforts to make progress in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III. A number of countries, their space agencies and space-related institutions, as well as United Nations entities and various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, carried out activities in the past five years that supported, complemented and strengthened the efforts of the Committee. The report before us this morning (A/59/174) is a manifestation of the efforts of all those entities.

Before I highlight some elements contained in the report, I would like, on behalf of the Committee, to thank its Working Group and its Chairman, Mr. Niklas Hedman of Sweden, for the outstanding work that the Committee has done over the past two years in preparing and finalizing the draft report. The flexible and participatory manner in which the Working Group carried out its work resulted in an increased sense of ownership of the report among Committee members. It also helped to build a solid foundation for further efforts in the coming years to transform the possibilities enunciated in the Vienna Declaration into realities for more countries and for more people. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Walther Lichem of Austria for the sincere contribution he made to the panel yesterday by introducing elements of the report into our discussions.

The report of the Committee consists of six main chapters, two of which I would particularly like to bring to the Assembly's attention. Chapter IV underscores the relevance of many of the actions called for in the Vienna Declaration to the goals and objectives of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the World Summit on the Information Society. The implementation of such actions would contribute significantly to the progress being made in the follow-up actions resulting from those global United Nations conferences.

Chapter VI of the report outlines a strategy for the way ahead. It contains a plan of action that proposes initiatives and actions to be undertaken by various entities — as identified in the plan — in the coming years in four main areas. Those areas are the use of space to support overarching global agendas for sustainable development; developing coordinated, global space capabilities; the use of space to support specific agendas to meet human development needs at the global level; and overarching capacity development. Chapter VI should also remind us that the review we are conducting this year should serve as a catalyst for further action aimed at fully integrating the application of space science and technology into the global development agenda.

That concludes my remarks to introduce the report of the Committee to the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Nigeria, who will introduce draft resolution A/59/L.4.

Mr. Wali (Nigeria): Nigeria has watched with keen interest and satisfaction the progress made on the global agenda for sustainable development since the first two United Nations Conferences on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, held in Vienna in 1968 and 1982. We also take note of the importance of social, economic and environmental considerations in sustainable human development and the role of space technology in addressing challenges to sustainable development.

To consolidate the achievements made by the United Nations through the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) was held in Vienna at the threshold of the present millennium. The result of that Conference — the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development — was adopted unanimously by the participating countries, including Nigeria, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/68. UNISPACE III therefore presented an opportunity to explore and exploit improved space capabilities and international cooperation in dealing with the challenges of the 33 recommendations of the Conference.

Nigeria is the action team leader, on behalf of Africa and many other Member States, in the implementation of recommendation 11, "Promote sustainable development by using the results of space research". Nigeria has continued to play a vital role in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. We have played that role because we are convinced of the beneficial impact of space science and technology on human development. We therefore commend all key players in the realization of the aspiration of the United Nations to ensure sustainable human development globally.

We acknowledge the previous efforts of COPUOS. Its Subcommittees and their Chairs — who worked tirelessly to put together the report of the UNISPACE III five-year review — have done a great and highly commendable service to the cause of the peaceful uses of outer space. No effort should be spared to consolidate the achievements of COPUOS and the implementation of recommendations of the World Summits on Sustainable Development and on the Information Society.

Nigeria will intensify its cooperation with the member States of COPUOS so that the benefits of the full implementation of UNISPACE III will be enjoyed by all United Nations Member States. In line with that aspiration, and as part of our contribution to global efforts in disaster management, Nigeria has contributed a satellite called NigeriaSat-1 to a set of satellites belonging to Algeria, China, Nigeria, Turkey and the United Kingdom in a disaster-monitoring constellation. Nigeria is also participating in the Cospar Sarsat international search and rescue satellite system programme and has put in place, in a number of West African States, facilities with beacons for search and rescue missions, especially in the West Africa subregion.

The Government of Nigeria has also approved the launching of a communications satellite in 2006. The satellite, named NigcomSat-1, will have footprint coverage in Africa to address the relevant and associated issues of information exchange and the digital divide, not only in Nigeria but also in Africa as a whole. Similarly, Algeria, South Africa and Nigeria are collaborating on a proposal to build and launch a constellation of African resource and environmental satellites.

That will provide high-resolution, affordable, real-time data to tackle the challenges of boosting sustainable food production in Africa. They will be used also for flood-disaster management and to assess the extent and rate of desertification and deforestation and their impact on food and livestock production. Other aspects of natural resources, as well as their assessment, development and management, including environmental questions, will also benefit from this programme. It is noteworthy that that initiative is in line with the New Partnership for Africa's Development's (NEPAD) platform for scientific excellence in Africa in order to be globally competitive and contribute to the socio-economic development of the continent.

Nigeria considers that the development of Africa is strategic to the full implementation and consolidation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III). We therefore call on the members of COPUOS to continue their efforts to ensure that the important conclusions of past meetings are translated into concrete actions. That should reinforce public interest in and support for the peaceful uses of outer space.

On behalf of the sponsors, Nigeria would like to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space" (A/59/L.4). The sponsors of the draft resolution are Chile, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Romania and Sweden. In addition, the Netherlands and Canada have also indicated their wish to be added as sponsors of the draft.

The draft resolution reflects a set of essential elements of this comprehensive report of the Committee. Last week the Fourth Committee's Working Group of the Whole on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, which is open for participation by all interested Member States, reviewed and agreed on the text of this draft resolution.

I should like to thank all those representatives who participated in the meetings, and in particular those Member States that are sponsoring the draft.

The preamble of the draft and its operative paragraphs 1 through 3 concern the background of UNISPACE and achievements made to date in its follow-up. By operative paragraph 4, the General Assembly would endorse the Plan of Action as proposed by the Committee in its report.

Paragraphs 6 through 12 concern actions proposed in the Plan of Action that affect the programme of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, and call on Member States to take specific actions or suggest a new mechanism for international community in space-related areas.

As regards paragraph 11 of the draft resolution, I should like to make a technical correction to the text. I understand that this correction affects all languages. In the first line, immediately after the word "System", the acronym "GNSS" should be added, in parentheses. In

the second and fourth lines, the word "System" should be replaced by the acronym "GNSS".

Paragraphs 13 to 17 relate to the activities to be carried out by the Office for Outer Space Affairs in the further implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

Finally, in paragraph 18, the Assembly agrees that the Committee should continue to consider the implementation of UNISPACE III recommendations at its session in 2005.

Mr. Hamburger (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Today's review, five years after the Conference in Vienna, was called for by the General Assembly in 1999.

The European Union considers the application of space technology as one of the tools for improving human living conditions. Space activities have the capacity to contribute to meeting many important development goals. The EU therefore welcomes the work initiated by the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), and we thank its Chairman, Mr. Abiodun, for the work done and for his introduction earlier in this meeting.

The report of COPUOS provides a good account of our joint efforts, undertaken for the improvement of human living conditions. The Committee, through a working group chaired by Mr. Hedman, has delivered a comprehensive and forward-looking assessment of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The staff of the Office for Outer Space Affairs has provided outstanding support in the preparation of the report and in the overall implementation process so far.

The report clearly demonstrates the benefits of using space technology in meeting worldwide development goals. It pays special attention to the synergy between the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the worldwide Development Goals of the Millennium Summit, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the World Summit on the Information Society. The recommendations of UNISPACE III contribute to meeting some of the challenges laid down by these Summits, such as the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achieving sustainable development and protecting the environment; better managing and alleviating the effects of disasters; and strengthening overarching capacity development, including bridging the digital divide.

The recommendations for further action, as contained in the Plan of Action of the report, address several important areas for improving human living conditions: the development of a comprehensive worldwide environmental monitoring strategy; protection of the Earth's environment and managing its resources; the use and application of global navigation satellite systems to support sustainable development; the use of telemedicine to increase health-care coverage, especially in isolated or underprivileged regions; and the coordination of space-based services for use in disaster management.

In that context, I would like briefly to mention the important role that the European Space Agency (ESA) plays. Many of the principles and goals of UNISPACE III correspond with the primary goals of ESA and are the basis of its cooperation activities. Through its various programmes, ESA implements many recommendations of UNISPACE III, for example by trying to improve universal access to, and the compatibility of, space-based navigation and positioning systems; scientific knowledge of near and outer space through cooperative activities; and the protection of the near-Earth space and outer space environments through mitigation of space debris, which increasingly affect the development of space activities.

Furthermore, the European Space Agency is the main financial contributor to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, a programme which seeks to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III by raising awareness as to the use of space technologies for the benefit of developing countries.

The European Union attaches great importance to the work done so far and encourages all involved to continue to do so with the same effort.

Bearing in mind the importance that Member States, governmental and non-governmental entities attach to UNISPACE III and the synergy between UNISPACE III and the aforementioned summits, the European Union is of the opinion that adequate funding should be made available for the implementation of the recommendations.

Finally, the method of establishing priorities in the recommendations of UNISPACE III, combined with the establishment of action teams under the voluntary leadership of Member States, proved to be a good mechanism for initiating the implementation process.

Mr. Ishikawa (Japan): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Adigun Abiodun of Nigeria for his presentation of the report, entitled "Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space". I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Niklas Hedman of Sweden, who chaired the Working Group of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). Under his great leadership, the report on the five-year review of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) was successfully finalized. Lastly, I would like to thank Ms. Takemi Chiku of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs for her outstanding work in compiling the report.

Since 1999, Japan has been making every effort to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III, and I would like to take a moment to express some of our views on that item.

With regard to the action teams that were created to facilitate the implementation of certain specific recommendations of UNISPACE III, it was our delegation's great pleasure to have served as a chair of the action team on item 17 on enhancing capacity-building through the development of human and budgetary resources. Action team no. 17 consists of 25 countries and seven organizations, and I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all of them for their kind cooperation and valuable contributions to the team's activities. I would also like to express my gratitude to the other countries and organizations that so graciously and voluntarily provided information on their related activities to our team. In virtue of their contribution, we believe that we could accomplish the substance of report.

Our action team proposes the following recommendations on the report: first, promoting the sharing of educational materials and information; secondly, coordinating international activities on capacity-building; thirdly, increasing assistance to regional centre activities; fourthly, enhancing opportunities for ongoing idea exchange on capacity-building; fifthly, facilitating the augmentation of budgetary resources and fellowships; and sixthly, preparing and distributing educational booklets.

I would like to request that earnest efforts be made to promote capacity-building in all countries, in accordance with our recommendations. Those efforts should be made in close cooperation and coordination with COPUOS member countries and organizations, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which addresses space education; the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, which is promoting the sharing of satellite data for education and the development of a database on capacity-building; and the International Astronautical Federation, which has almost completed development of a database on capacity-building that includes educational materials. It is our hope that, by working together with countries and organizations participating in COPUOS, we can contribute to the education and training of the next generation in the fields of space development and utilization and space science. Japan will also contribute to international activities on capacity-building by continuing to implement our team's recommendations.

In addition to item 17, Japan also participated in and contributed to activities of other action teams, such as those on environmental monitoring, natural resources management, weather and climate forecasting, disaster management, global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) and near-Earth objects. I would like to express my appreciation for all the work of those action teams. Japan will continue to cooperate in order to implement the recommendations of the action teams.

Regarding disaster management, for example, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency has applied to join International Charter "Space and Major Disasters" and is now participating in Charter activities as an observer. I believe that Japan can actively contribute to work in that field through actions such as the implementation of the recommendations, as proposed by the action team on disaster management. I would also like to inform the Assembly that the World

Conference on Disaster Reduction will be held in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005. Taking note of the draft resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space that was adopted by the Fourth Committee on Monday, 18 October, I believe that the outcome of the Kobe Conference could play an important role in the future work of COPUOS.

Another example of possible future work in which Japan could be involved is the establishment of the international committee on GNSS, which was proposed by the action team on GNSS. I also believe that Japan, as one of the GNSS providers, will dynamically contribute to the that committee.

With regard to synergies between the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and global initiatives, I would like to underscore the important initiative of the Earth Observation Summit.

As a reflection of the growing concern about global environmental problems, the Action Plan on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development was adopted at the Evian G-8 summit last June. The plan recognizes Earth observation as one of three important fields in which efforts should be concentrated in the future. The importance of Earth observation was also acknowledged during the first Earth Observation Summit, held in the United States last July. At the second Earth Observation Summit, which was held in Japan in April this year, a framework for a 10-year implementation plan was adopted. The plan will provide for the construction of the Earth observation system or systems, which will advance many specific areas of socio-economic benefit through international cooperation. During the third Earth Observation Summit, to be held in Belgium in February 2005, a concrete implementation plan will be adopted.

As members know, the special exhibition on space technology and human development is now being organized here on the occasion of the UNISPACE III + 5 review. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency is contributing posters regarding its activities on education and Earth observation to the exhibition in order to celebrate that important milestone.

Space is a common frontier for all mankind and, as such, offers infinite possibilities. We should look beyond national borders to help bring the benefits derived from space activities not only to the citizens of the countries engaged in space activities, but to all humankind. Japan hopes to make important contributions to global prosperity by actively participating in international cooperative activities based on a broad and long-term vision.

With that in mind, Japan would like to express its respect for the efforts of the United Nations in those fields. Japan is determined to promote international cooperation, together with members of the United Nations and COPUOS, so that the benefits derived from space activities can be enjoyed by the people of the world.

Mr. Hodgkins (United States of America): In 1958, soon after the launching of Earth-orbiting satellites imparted new intensity to the cold war, the General Assembly acted to create the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in the hope that the use of space could be channelled away from military application and harnessed instead for constructive gain. Recognizing space as another new frontier of human endeavour that held both promise and danger in equal measure, nations aimed to erect a structure that would foster cooperation and shared benefits.

In the past four decades, COPUOS has acted under that mandate to develop and adopt five major outer space treaties and to promulgate valuable standards that serve as international principles. In doing so, the Committee has generated nothing less than an entirely new branch of international law. COPUOS has also acted as a catalyst, promoting international cooperation in space activities and fostering a broad information exchange among developed and developing countries on the latest advances in space exploration and their beneficial results.

Like COPUOS, the American space programme was born at the height of the cold war in the context of a looming rivalry for supremacy in missiles and space. Fortunately, over time that conflict evaporated, and we are now able to see our space activities primarily as an instrument of human advancement and international cooperation.

Against that backdrop, the States members and observers of COPUOS agreed that the time had come to chart a new course for the United Nations in the peaceful uses of outer space, in the form of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).

UNISPACE III was the last major United Nations conference of the twentieth century. Member States and the Office for Outer Space Affairs worked under severe time and resource constraints, but despite that, the Conference was a real success from an organizational and substantive standpoint. The Secretariat's report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session (A/54/20 and Corr.1) on the unique organizational matters relating to UNISPACE III provides concrete examples for other bodies of the United Nations on convening conferences that address important global issues while keeping costs within exiting resources.

In addition to our success in organizing the Conference, we were especially pleased with the breadth and scope of the topics considered at UNISPACE III, as well as with the extensive involvement of leading scientists, Government officials and private sector representatives. The emphasis on space applications, private space activities and potential opportunities for cooperation makes the programme of work highly relevant to the needs of developed and developing countries.

In reviewing the Vienna Declaration and the Conference's report, we were encouraged that the event produced recommendations and conclusions that supported our overall objectives. Those include broader participation in activities related to the monitoring and understanding of the Earth and its environment; the identification of new areas conducive to international cooperation; the endorsement of and increased support for existing mechanisms utilized for international cooperation; the strengthening of the space applications programme; the dissemination of information on space research areas and strategies for developing countries; improved coordination and less duplication among United Nations organizations involved in space activities; the greater involvement of young scientists and engineers, as well as of industry, in COPUOS activities; strengthened regional space cooperation; and the promotion of civil and commercial applications in the use of outer space.

We have before us a final comprehensive report (A/59/174) on the review of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, including a plan of action consisting of a set of concrete proposals by the Committee for specific actions to be undertaken in further implementing those recommendations. We support the plan of action and intend to work at the national and international levels to ensure that as many of the recommendations as possible are carried out. We were particularly pleased with the unique contribution that the action teams made to those efforts. Under the voluntary leadership of Governments, this innovative mechanism has allowed the participation of governmental and non-governmental entities in the follow-up to UNISPACE III, while preserving the pivotal role of Member States.

In conclusion, I s' ld like to call to the attention of representatives the dedication shown by a number of individuals involved in preparing the report. In the first instance, Mr. Karl Doetsch of Canada, former Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, deserves our deep appreciation for being a leading advocate for the concept of the action teams. Without that mechanism, COPUOS would never have been in a position to demonstrate the progress in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III as reflected in the comprehensive report.

The staff of the Office for Outer Space Affairs displayed a limitless capacity for hard work in supporting the action teams and drafting this report. Sergio Camacho and Takemi Chiku were exceptional in that regard.

Finally, the Chairman of the working group charged with drafting the report, Mr. Niklas Hedman of Sweden, deserves special thanks. Mr. Hedman willingly took on the challenge over one year ago with the knowledge that he would have to bring together the work of the action teams, member States, international organizations and non-governmental entities into a coherent product. He accomplished the task with a level of leadership, hard work and vision that we have all come to admire.

Mr. Sun Laiyan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like first of all to thank the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) for his introductory statement on this item.

It is becoming increasingly evident that, given the advances in science and technology that are being made, as well as social progress, space technology can help us to make great strides in the peaceful exploration and development of outer space. It is one of the most influential advanced technologies in the world today. In this, the space age, it is clear that space technology is having an increasing influence on modern production processes and on daily life. It has

also played an important role in our efforts to achieve sustainable development.

In this context, the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) was held in Vienna in 1999, on the eve of the twenty-first century. The document entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development" set out guiding principles and recommendations for utilizing space technology and responding to challenges. It is an instrument with historic significance. Its positive impact will enhance the peaceful uses of space science and technology, reinforce international space cooperation and promote economic development and social progress for all countries, especially the developing countries.

The Chinese Government has consistently supported the peaceful use of outer space, with special attention being given to the implementation of the UNISPACE III recommendations. Since 2000, the Chinese Government, in conjunction with the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific, has hosted a number of training courses, workshops and seminars on space technology and applications for the Asia-Pacific region. This campaign takes place annually in China in the context of World Space Week, in order to raise awareness of the peaceful uses of outer space, as advocated by the United Nations.

China has taken an active part in the COPUOS disaster management multi-year action team. We co-chaired this action team with Canada and France and worked with other participating countries to put forward specific proposals for establishing, within the United Nations system, a global disaster coordination and management mechanism based on space resources. The Chinese Government has offered substantial human and financial resources for the implementation of UNISPACE III recommendations.

The objective of human exploration and development of outer space should be for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of the people of all nations. All countries should enjoy equal rights and take an active part in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. All activities in outer space should be conducive to international peace and security, and to human subsistence and development. Therefore, the Chinese Government advocates closer international space cooperation, based on equality, mutual benefit, mutual complementarity and common progress.

In international space cooperation, we should abide by the basic principles embodied in General Assembly resolution 51/122 of 1996, entitled "Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries". China will continue to reinforce space cooperation with developing countries, actively promote Asia-Pacific regional cooperation and support space cooperation with other regions of the world. We will continue our cooperation with developed countries in order to enhance the space capacity-building of the developing countries and to achieve economic and social "leap-frog" development by means of space technology and its applications.

China, as a developing country, always defines its space programme on the basis of realistic needs and the long-term strategy of its national development. Building on past achievements, in its next five-year-plan China will focus on satellite applications and the development of large capacity, high quality and long-lasting telecommunications satellites, so as to gradually consolidate China's satellite telecommunications industry. We will also devote further study and exploration to a new generation of non-toxic, non-polluting, highly efficient and low-cost launch vehicles and improve the capacity and reliability of the existing "Long March" launch vehicles.

In addition, China plans to establish an integrated long-term, stable, all-weather, high-orbit-resolution earth observation system, composed mainly of smaller satellites for meteorology, earth resources, ocean, earth and environmental disaster monitoring. We shall continue our research on earth-sun physics, manned space flight programmes, lunar orbiting engineering and deep-space exploration, so as to facilitate the sustainable development of China's space programme.

The twenty-first century will witness a vigorous development of space science and technology and their applications. The world's political, economic, scientific, technological and cultural links are becoming closer. New opportunities and possibilities might develop from our efforts to seek solutions to protracted global problems.

The Chinese Government will continue its international space cooperation with the rest of the world, actively conduct space science study, promote space technology development and reinforce space applications and their implementation, so that space technology will better serve all humankind.

Mr. Sriwidjaja (Indonesia): Sir, allow me at the outset to commend the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), Mr. Adigun Ade Abiodun of Nigeria, and the members of the Bureau for their substantive contributions and to assure them of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the present deliberations. Similarly, we wish to convey our gratitude to the Chairmen of the COPUOS Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee.

Progress and development in outer space activities are occurring at an increasing rate due to the benefits they offer and the capacity of countries to take advantage of them. The development of science and technology in the field of outer space and its applications have resulted in great and unprecedented benefits for education, health, environmental monitoring, natural resources management, disaster management, meteorological forecasting, satellite navigation and communications. However, the practical benefits of space science and technology applications have not reached all people and nations equally. While space technology has been extensively applied by the developed world, a large part of the developing world has yet to benefit from space applications, and most of the world has only limited access in that respect.

Against this backdrop, Indonesia believes that the positive and significant developments of space science and technology should be more strongly and primarily focused on the common interests and welfare of all humankind, regardless of different political, cultural and social systems or levels of economic development. In a similar vein, the Indonesian Government also supports the development of mechanisms for strengthening inter-agency cooperation and for increasing the use of space science and applications within and among entities of the United Nations.

While cooperation under the auspices of the United Nations system has been taking place for some years, it is felt that the pattern and methods of carrying out such cooperation, especially in the transfer of technology, have not yet resulted in enhanced technological capability and related human resource development in most developing countries. Consequently, they are required to undertake an ever-increasing number of self-sustaining space activities by themselves.

The industrialization and commercialization of space activities are the result of the benefits that can be derived for the progress and development of space technology for global society at large. Through the efforts of industrialization and commercialization, funds should be made available to finance the further progress and development of outer space technology. In fact, most developing countries that have benefited from space technology and its applications are consumers of space technology products.

In this respect, my delegation has carefully noted the active and constructive role played by COPUOS, as a catalyst in efforts to fulfil the noble and common goals of its member countries. It is indeed our fervent hope that the Committee will continue to be consistent and active in promoting international cooperation, particularly between developed and developing countries, so as to accelerate social and economic development in the developing countries.

It is also our expectation that through such cooperation, the developing countries will have greater access to and greater opportunities to increase their capabilities in outer space activities. For that reason, programmes involving the use of satellite remote-sensing data, courses in the application of remote sensing, and training seminars and workshops on space applications need to be intensified and expanded.

Concerning the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), Indonesia has participated in, and sent an expert to become a member of, the expert group on the implementation of an integrated space-based global natural disaster management system. Indonesia also supports the programme and is ready to contribute further towards its work in cooperation with other countries, through, inter alia, exchanges of data and of experts.

My delegation has noted that the Committee has acknowledged a limited awareness among both the general public and policymakers of the benefits of outer space activities. There is a definite relationship

between that limited awareness and the impediments faced in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, such as limited financial resources and the number of experts, which could be larger. It has been indicated that those challenges could also be connected to difficulties in calculating the cost-benefit advantages of space applications.

My delegation has also noted that, although a large number of States had expressed an interest in participating in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, and although the work of the action teams was indeed open-ended — permitting interested States and organizations to participate at any point in the process — unfortunately, various constellations of the impediments I mentioned earlier amounted to major obstacles to their participation.

The Vienna Declaration calls for a number of actions that are relevant to the goals and objectives of conferences convened after UNISPACE III, such as the Millennium Summit, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the World Summit on the Information Society. The implementation of the UNISPACE III recommendations would contribute to progress in follow-up actions to these global conferences.

Steps could be taken to further increase the synergy between the follow-up activities of UNISPACE III and those of global conferences of the United Nations system. While specific areas where space science and technology and their applications could play an important role were identified by the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the World Summit on the Information Society, many other areas remain in which they could contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of those summits and of the Millennium Declaration.

With regard to the priorities of Indonesian national development, our activities are directed primarily at developing applications of outer space technology. These are aimed at supporting and bolstering the development of space applications and industrial activities.

As to activities related to space science and climate research, my country is now developing an Indonesian climate model and studying the natural phenomena and specifications of the atmosphere and ionosphere-upper atmosphere in connection with Earth environmental conditions. In order to enhance capabilities in the area of acquiring data on atmospheric phenomena over the equatorial region, the Indonesian National Institute of Aeronautics and Space (LAPAN), in cooperation with Japan's Kyoto University, has been operating since 2001 a meteorological instrument in West Sumatra called the Equatorial Atmosphere Radar.

Furthermore, LAPAN and the Technical University of Berlin, Germany, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop the first Indonesian micro-satellite, called LAPAN-TUBSAT. Through such cooperation, Indonesian engineers will have the opportunity to master satellite-building stages, from designing to implementing, testing, launching and operating the satellites.

LAPAN-TUBSAT will carry a remote sensing, store and forward communications payload and will be launched in 2005. Our next outer space programme is to develop a remote-sensing micro-satellite to support national food security in collaboration with the German Aerospace Centre (DLR); its launch is planned for 2008. Another memorandum of understanding between LAPAN and the Space Research Organization of India on cooperation in the field of space research technology and development was concluded in New Delhi in 2002; and a memorandum of intent between LAPAN and the Russian Aviation and Space Technology Application was signed in Moscow in 2003. Indonesia expects to expand its cooperation with other countries in the maintenance, exploration and peaceful uses of outer space for the benefit of all nations.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate our full support for the work of the Committee in promoting international cooperation and in its efforts to fulfil our common goal of maintaining outer space for peaceful uses and the benefit of all humankind.

Mr. Aninat (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The current international environment, which is characterized by instability, uncertainty and new threats, presents a bleak picture which we must address jointly and creatively, in the context of a globalization that is universal and inclusive. To seek to preserve a situation of profound social exclusion would not only be immoral but would also lead to the continued erosion of the fragile social fabric of the international community.

Placing people at the centre of our concerns is the great challenge facing us. To succeed, we will need to achieve the proper synergy between diplomatic action and the scientific and technological approach — a concept that is now beginning to emerge in various forums, debates and study centres.

Space technology, because of its capacity to reach all points on the planet, is particularly qualified to play that role. Those responsible for making decisions cannot continue to neglectfully and irresponsibly present this technology as too sophisticated to meet the needs of common people. We must, on the contrary, gradually integrate it and place it in the service of the needy as a means of resolving social and humanitarian problems whose solutions are long overdue.

Satellite technologies are vital tools for creating conditions of sustainable development and human security. That idea was set out in the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III). For the first time, the private sector and industry actively participated in that important international event. Specifically, open-ended action teams were established in various areas that have begun to function very effectively within the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). My country is a member of the Action Team on Disaster Management, which, for obvious reasons, is of particular relevance today.

The careful study of the positive effects of space applications conducted by UNISPACE III and its recent review conference, UNISPACE III + 5, merely confirmed the existence of two factors that are not adequately self-reinforcing: the enormous potential of space technology to address and resolve all those problems that prevent individuals and nations from achieving minimally acceptable levels of security and human development, on the one hand, and, on the other, persistent evidence of the half-hearted commitment of countries to prioritizing that key item on the agenda of their concerns, thereby markedly reducing the chances for improvement in the quality of life of their citizens. That holds true despite the fact that, in an incipient but global way, increasingly effective and coherent international organs are being developed that define their development strategies to include the potent presence of the space component.

The varied and dynamic action of organizations of the United Nations system, the inclusion of this topic in the agenda of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the imminent creation of the geodetic Earth-orbiting satellite, the interest shown by such important scientific bodies as International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and the Interdepartmental Committee on Space in Trieste, among others, reflects a commitment whose conclusions must be more actively assumed. In the Americas, we cannot fail to mention the important work of regional cooperation on space that has been done by the Space Conference of the Americas, whose fifth session, thanks to the positive initiative of the Government of Ecuador, will be held in Quito next year.

At the national level, mention must be made of the substantial work of disseminating information and promoting awareness of the theme of space that has been done by the International Air and Space Fair (FIDAE), which is held every two years in Chile. Its importance has been underscored in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on the subject. The next FIDAE will be held in Chile in 2006, with the theme "Satellites and distance learning".

Progress has therefore been made in raising awareness in institutions of the United Nations and at relevant international conferences. It is now up to Governments themselves to transform the recommendations into actions and tangible benefits for their peoples, based on the critical mass that is now available and which will gradually increase.

We must remember in that regard the role of engine and catalyst played by resolution 56/51 of 2001, which took note of the letter of the Chairman of COPUOS to the Secretary-General drawing his attention to the subject. In response to that call, the annual Inter-Agency Meeting prepared a list of agencies as recommended in the Plan of Action of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as well as other initiatives of similar scope and content.

The lack of firm political will to develop appropriate space-related plans and institutions is an obstacle to the promotion of human development projects. On the other hand, diplomacy, which continues to be strongly influenced by formal and doctrinaire traditional elements, requires — and let there be no doubt about this — urgent updating. It must include in its scope of action a more vigorous scientific

and technological component to translate into reality what has already been set out in the 2001 report of the United Nations Development Programme on the peaceful use of science and technology for the benefit of humankind and not for its destruction, as is often the case in these fateful times marked by war and terrorism.

To underscore in that context the tremendous advantages of space applications is almost redundant. They are, moreover, effectively underscored in the low-profile but very positive work being done by the aforementioned action groups established by UNISPACE III. There is no human activity today that cannot be approached using that technology, and most require it. The mapping of natural resources; migration; the control of infectious diseases, such as malaria and cholera; the monitoring of drug trafficking, small arms and light weapons, and organized transnational crime; and the mitigation and prevention of natural disasters, among other aspects, are examples of the specific potential of that technology. In all of them, the direct beneficiary or victim, depending on the use made of the satellite images, is humankind. Humankind and its dignity are an issue that falls under the concept of human security and are recognized as such by United Nations instruments, such as those referred to in the Vienna Declaration adopted by UNISPACE III and in the relevant human rights instruments that are of universal and inalienable scope.

Mention must be made, however, in that context, of a significant obstacle and structural impediment that also requires a major additional effort on the part of Governments. To the extent that much of mankind lacks access to knowledge and to equal and equitable education, any public policy that is elaborated will be doomed to failure. The effort to design technological models that are appropriate to the needs of countries will invariably come up against the insurmountable obstacle of what the economist Joseph Stiglitz has termed "imperfect information". Hunger and poverty will persist, paradoxically and cruelly, despite the fact that space applications can be used to improve yields, develop new crops, manage coastal resources, expand the horizons of biotechnology and so on. However, if the potential of space does not provide finished data, the transnational communications media are not inclusive in their approach, and we lack the human resources or infrastructure to adequately interpret acts, we will be faced once more with virtual technologies, media constructs rather than practical successes.

If we do not face the problems of the social agenda at the global level, the knowledge gap will continue to widen and we will continue to create a society of mass disinformation — a culturally destabilizing weapon — that we cannot call upon in its situation of despair and inequality to automatically align itself with supposedly democratic values. The principal value that we must demand is the right to life. Space technology is a promising element for strengthening that essential, inalienable and sacrosanct right. Access to education and to knowledge in general through telecommunications assumes, in the aforementioned context, special and considerable importance.

The concept of the common heritage of humankind that emerges from an interrelated interpretation of the relevant norms of space law and, specifically, of the 1967 space Treaty, is the irrefutable doctrinal basis for the aforementioned space applications to be directed towards the people and their essential needs to help them attain a decent standard of living, as set out, moreover, in Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Lichem (Austria): At the outset, Sir, may I articulate what many of us here feel — a sense of appreciation and thanks for your personally chairing these deliberations, which we consider to be of great importance for the future development of the agenda on space and the global agenda.

Austria fully endorses the statement presented by the Dutch presidency of the European Union on behalf of its member States and would like to briefly elaborate on a few additional aspects of the agenda item under consideration.

As we are aware, many, if not most, of the agenda items under consideration at the global level — the global agenda in general — have an institutional dimension. It is no coincidence that the institutional adjustment of the way we address the various items on our global agenda has often become as important as the substantive challenges to be addressed. The slogan of United Nations reform has, for many good reasons, accompanied us for many decades.

In that context, it may be of interest to ask — on the occasion of a review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) — what institutional framework has been evolving in the field of space

exploration and the peaceful use of space technology, with regard to the governance regimes at the national, regional and international levels within the space sector, as well as with regard to the existing or desired linkages between space, on the one hand, and the various challenges on our global agenda, on the other.

As to the governance systems existing with regard to space exploration and technology development, we can observe an institutional evolution which could almost be described as a model for many other sectoral management systems at the global level. Few other sectors of our global agenda have been able to demonstrate similar achievements in innovation, cooperation and support with regard to the linkages among Government, the space agencies, the science community and academia, parliamentarians, the private sector, industry and civil society organizations in the field of outer space. That is true at all levels of governance: the national, the regional and the global.

As a consequence of the necessary economies of scale in space exploration and in the application of space technology capacities, international cooperation has been an evolving and essential element, with the United Nations and United Nations specialized agencies — such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Meteorological Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) — often as initial partners.

Parliamentarians have also taken an interest in the development of space capacities. One example is the fifth European Interparliamentary Space Conference, held in Berlin in November 2003, which concluded that space and its utilization are essential for a better definition and more efficient implementation of European Union policies both with regard to the space sector and concerning the application of space technology.

On the other hand, the need for horizontal cooperation has led the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space — a Committee of the General Assembly — to accredit 17 non-governmental international institutions from academia and civil society, in addition to international organizations such as the International Telecommunication Union, FAO, UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme, as observers to the Committee.

The Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, provides an important, substantive new orientation for the agenda of the space community, and one which also has institutional implications. The potential for space to be able to help address the challenges faced by the international community, and consequently to support efforts towards the achievement of the objectives defined by the Millennium Summit, has been now been recognized.

On 19 October, the panel discussion on "Outer Space and the Global Agenda", which was addressed by the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Economic and Social Council in addition to leading space managers from France and Malaysia and the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, reflected the new focus of the development potential of space technology. It was the first time in the history of the United Nations that the Economic and Social Council, through its President, was seized of the topic of outer space and that the outer space agenda reached out institutionally to the agenda of the Economic and Social Council. That new orientation of our space agenda — to meet human development needs at the global level — is the fruit of UNISPACE III, a trend that merits ever-more accentuated attention.

In institutional terms, the challenge now is how to further develop the linkages between space and the economic, social and environmental agendas at the national, regional and global levels. Indeed, significant steps have already been taken. Some cases in point include the Group on Earth Observations and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, which are working on the role of space in disaster reduction management, already mentioned several times this morning, and the European Space Agency's programme for Africa — the TIGER Initiative — which uses space observation for better water resources development.

In the context of preparations for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, efforts are currently under way — and, in fact, a meeting will be held in Paris next week — to explore and articulate the fundamental contribution made by space technology to the evolving information society. It would be hard to imagine the evolution of information and communication technologies without the achievements already made in the application of space technology.

Reviewing the new policy focus that evolved from UNISPACE III with regard to space and society, space and development and space and our global agenda, it may be beneficial to consider further fostering the institutional and the discourse links between space and the global governance discourse at an earlier phase of the decision-making process, both with regard to intergovernmental structures as well as in the context of the broader cooperation existing in the conceptualization phase.

UNISPACE III has defined an important dimension of our new space agenda. That is to be recognized also in the context of the achievements in the space agenda's institutional development. The objectives of the Vienna Conference of 1999 not only remain valid; their relevance is constantly proven in the context of our global agenda and will be the yardstick for the coming years.

Mr. Brachet (France) (*spoke in French*): The French delegation fully endorses the statement made earlier by the Netherlands on behalf of the presidency of the European Union.

Each of the three United Nations Conferences on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space contributed significantly to promoting international cooperation in the area of space and underscored the value of space technologies for the development of all of humankind. For that reason, my delegation is pleased that the General Assembly has chosen to devote today's meeting to taking stock of the status of the implementation of the recommendations made in 1999 by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III).

UNISPACE III encouraged continued international cooperation in scientific research and space exploration and the protection of near-Earth space. In that connection, it particularly stressed the importance of limiting space debris. Work is still under way within the Outer Space Committee on this subject. The conference also stressed the extent to which space technology is able to contribute to a very broad range of activities and human needs beyond its well-known uses in, among others, space exploration and telecommunications. I will simply mention a few examples.

Space applications make it possible to improve our knowledge and management of the environment in the broadest sense, whether it be in the field of meteorology, climatology, predicting and managing natural disasters, agriculture, marine resources or land development. It provides solutions, making it possible to meet the needs of vulnerable populations in the field of health care through telemedicine or tele-epidemiology and in the field of education, thanks to remote-teaching technology. These contribute to the improvement of safety in transportation, thanks to satellite positioning and search and rescue systems.

France has been carrying out many projects in all the areas I have just mentioned. As a result, we have been establishing partnerships with most of the countries that have space agencies. Outer space has, in fact, now become a growing field of intensive international cooperation. The report presented today in the General Assembly is both a summary of progress and a useful assessment of future prospects. My delegation, like all the delegations that have spoken before me, would also like to thank the principal contributors to the report, the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the chairman of the working group and, of course, the Office for Outer Space Affairs. France, for its part, has gotten particularly involved with the action team on disaster management, which it co-chaired with Canada and China, and with the team dealing with new sources of financing.

In the realm of disaster management, substantial initiatives have already been taken since UNISPACE III. The International Charter "Space and Major Disasters" has thus made it possible, since the year 2000, to disseminate space data free of charge in order to facilitate the work of civil security organizations in the event of natural or man-made disasters. France has been resolutely committed to the global coordination of systems for earth observation, which will make it possible, among other advantages, to intensify international cooperation in the area of disaster management.

With regard to the mobilization of new funding sources, we will also contribute, as stressed by the Committee's report, to the increase of regional cooperation in the field of space. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to stress the major role of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in support of the objectives decided on at UNISPACE III. France is making a substantial contribution to this, particularly through the European Space Agency, of which we finance more than a quarter of the budget.

As declared in the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, the relevant General Assembly resolutions and the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, progress in space exploration and the use of space for peaceful purposes are in the interests of the whole of humankind. With this conviction, France will continue to play an active part in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and in the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Mr. Gallardo (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru is of the view that the third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) represents a continuation of decades of efforts by the international community to put space at the service of all States and to make it an arena that is conducive to cooperation for its use for peaceful purposes. Peru reaffirms its conviction that the best way to express our commitment to avoid any form of arms race in outer space is to promote the use of space for the fulfilment of economic and social development goals, making them concrete and visible realities for the population.

UNISPACE III presents a new international approach that sees space from the vantage point of earth, giving priority to addressing the problems of our environment, especially the fight against poverty and social exclusion. After the cold war, the fast-paced period of technological change and the acceleration of the process we now refer to as globalization, we have decided to act in space to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to achieve sustainable development and to address our social needs, especially those expressed by our fight against social exclusion. Likewise, the peaceful use of outer space is relevant in our efforts to form a society in which information and the transmission of information increasingly represent the core of the most advanced economic activities. Acquiring new technologies improves our capacity for development.

Accordingly, Peru takes special interest in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. We welcome the advances achieved thus far. In this regard, let me stress that Peru has participated in the work of the action teams to pursue the goals of UNISPACE III with regard to activities concerning natural disasters and sustainable development, as an expression of its commitment to UNISPACE III.

Despite the great importance of achieving progress in the implementation of UNISPACE III, we have encountered certain obstacles. One of these is the scant progress that has been made in increasing awareness about the new approach, including among those who have the responsibility to take political decisions. In order for that awareness to develop and in order to overcome some of the other obstacles encountered, we must have greater resources and improved dissemination of information.

If we pause to compare some of the well-known and well-funded projects now under way to others that have not yet taken shape, a question arises: is it really more important to find water on other heavenly bodies surrounding the earth than to deal with the problems of water on our own planet?

Peru encourages all steps leading to a broader dissemination of our purposes. In that regard, we express our full support and satisfaction with the holding of the fifth Space Conference of the Americas, which, if the authorities of Ecuador so confirm, will take place in Quito. Peru hopes that this experience can be institutionalized and consolidated into an initiative that brings the region into even greater involvement with the achievements of UNISPACE III.

The UNISPACE III efforts to build an agenda that links space issues to social issues are not only in its own interest, but also in the interest of the international community. Accordingly, Peru encourages the development of a broader international agenda that would enable us to make headway in areas relevant to social development, including health, education, information, poverty eradication, disaster prevention, environmental protection, humanitarian support and, perhaps, assistance in conflict situations.

Peru supports the plan of action proposed by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and looks forward to its prompt implementation so that we can move ahead towards the attainment of the goals set out in UNISPACE III. We would like to thank the Chairman of the Committee for his report and wish him every success.

Mr. Kuzmenkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation warmly welcomes the outcome of the efforts to implement the decisions of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III). It was during that Conference that an

initiative was launched to observe World Space Week annually from 4 to 10 October — 4 October 1957 being the date on which the first Sputnik was launched, and 10 October 1967 being the date of the entry into force of the "charter" for space activity — the Outer Space Treaty.

It is with great satisfaction that we note the valuable contribution that space science and technology make to improving the welfare of humankind and the development of countries throughout the world. The vast potential of space technology for improving peoples living conditions points to the need for the further intensification of international cooperation in that sphere. Thus, the plan proposed for the period to 2017 for international cooperation in space includes forecasting natural disasters and reducing their consequences, space communication systems, global navigation, distance education and tele-medicine, as well as the use of space technology in various economic spheres.

We are convinced that such work should continue to be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, particularly by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We must agree that that organ of the General Assembly, with the support and assistance of informal dedicated working groups specially created for this task, has already done a great deal of important work in implementing the decisions of UNISPACE III, particularly those that are reflected in the Vienna Declaration.

In this connection, I would like to thank Mr. Hedman for his efforts with regard to activities of the various working groups and of States and international organizations, and for so clearly presenting the voluminous material related to those efforts, set out in document A/59/174, which is before the Assembly.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, however, has still not paid due attention to its priority task of preserving outer space for peaceful purposes — a requirement set out in the Vienna Declaration. We call for a renewal of discussions on ways and means of ensuring that outer space is used only for peaceful purposes. It would be logical to integrate such a discussion into a constructive approach to resolving the issue of reviving a special committee on space within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

In conclusion, we would like to express our gratitude to the delegation of Nigeria for preparing the draft resolution on the review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/59/L.4). That document fully reflects the results of the five years of work on the implementation of UNISPACE IIIs decisions, and our delegation supports its adoption by the General Assembly.

Mr. Chaliha (India): We are happy to be participating in this event to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held in Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999. The theme of the Conference, "Space benefits for humanity in the twenty-first century", reflected the status of the challenges facing the world, as well as the opportunities provided by developments in the field of space to meet those challenges. The Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, adopted at the conclusion of the Conference, offered a strategy to address global challenges using space-based systems and services.

The current five-year review by the General Assembly of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III was mandated by the Vienna Declaration. We appreciate the efforts made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in preparing the extensive and detailed documentation for the review. The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Abiodun; the Chairman of the Working Group which prepared the draft document, Mr. Hedman; and the Director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), Mr. Camacho, and his staff, deserve our appreciation for their efforts.

The primary objectives of UNISPACE III, as set out in 1997 by the General Assembly, were, first, to promote effective means of using space solutions to address problems of regional or global significance; secondly, to strengthen the capabilities of Member States, especially developing nations, to use the results of space research for economic and cultural development; and, thirdly, to enhance international cooperation in space science and technology and its applications.

The current review should help us to evaluate the extent to which those primary objectives were met in

the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

We recognize the high level of synergy between the implementation of UNISPACE III and the recommendations and the outcomes of other major United Nations conferences and summits. Many of the targets set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and at the World Summit on the Information Society could be effectively met by implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

The contributions of the Committee in taking up new agenda items in line with the recommendations of UNISPACE III and of UNOOSA in orienting the United Nations Programme on Space Applications to the priorities set by the UNISPACE III recommendations, as well as the organization of action teams to address some of the priority recommendations, are commendable.

Experts from a number of countries contributed to the work of the action teams, which translated the recommendations in the Vienna Declaration into practical actions and pilot projects. The objective of increased international cooperation in the field of outer space was given greater impetus as a result of those activities.

We agree with the assessment in the report on progress to date in implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III. Considerable momentum has been generated in realizing the importance of space to meet development challenges. The activities carried out so far, including the detailed work by the action teams, can be termed the initial phase of the implementation of the UNISPACE III recommendations.

We have, however, also noted the following challenges — identified in the report — to the implementation of the recommendations: limited awareness among policy makers of the benefits of space activities; limited financial resources to implement the recommendations; limited expertise in space matters, especially in developing countries; and the challenge of engaging the private sector to work with Governments and intergovernmental organizations as partners in the implementation of the recommendations.

We should enable COPUOS and UNOOSA to take the implementation of the UNISPACE III recommendations to the next level. We can take pride in our UNISPACE III initiative only when concrete results have been achieved for the benefit of developing countries. In that regard, the General Assembly can provide support at two levels: first, at the political level, by putting its weight behind COPUOS and UNOOSA; and secondly, by specifically mandating the implementation of the detailed action plans recommended by the action teams.

The effectiveness of space applications in enhancing national development in developing countries is an established fact. Space-based services and applications can contribute significantly to the management of Earth's natural resources by enhancing communications, especially in rural or inaccessible regions; by supporting disaster-management activities; and by making distance learning and tele-health services possible. The applications of space-based systems and services have become an integral part of India's national development activities. We are of the view that all developing countries should initiate space applications programmes and should participate in the pilot projects identified by the action teams.

The availability of funds to implement the recommendations is an important question requiring strong support from the General Assembly. The Secretary-General has addressed a letter to all States urging them to contribute to the Trust Fund established to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In addition to renewing that appeal, we should call upon Member States to encourage private-sector industries in the space field to contribute to the Trust Fund.

I shall now address certain specific actions mentioned in the chapter entitled "The way ahead". The establishment of a disaster management international space coordination organization is a priority activity that would benefit all countries. The amount of wealth being lost throughout the world every year because of natural disasters justifies the investment required to establish such an organization. That would complement the initiative undertaken by some space agencies in establishing the International Charter "Space and Major Disasters". While the scope of the Charter is limited to providing remote sensing data on products in support of disaster management, the scope of the proposed organization would be more inclusive and would address capacity-building in the area of space systems in disaster management.

The specific action plans elaborated by the Action Team on Capacity-building are practical and fall within the scope of UNOOSA and the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. Building the capacity of developing countries to initiate and gainfully benefit from space applications programmes would be key to the success of all other initiatives. The regional centres for space science and technology education, established in various regions of the world and affiliated with the United Nations, could be put to effective use in the implementation of the recommendations on capacity-building.

Many other specific actions and pilot projects elaborated by the action teams should be implemented with the participation of interested Member States. Some of the proposed activities have particular relevance for certain regions of the world, and others have global relevance. The specialized agencies of the United Nations should actively contribute to the action plans, reaping the benefits for their own programmes.

India strongly supports the activities taken up by COPUOS and UNOOSA in the initial phase of the implementation of the UNISPACE III recommendations. Those initiatives should be continued with a view to translating into reality the specific action plans proposed by the action teams. Progress can result in concrete benefits for all countries — especially developing countries — from the implementation of the UNISPACE III recommendations.

India endorses proposals by COPUOS and UNOOSA contained in the report. The General Assembly should mandate COPUOS and UNOOSA to pursue the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III with the ultimate aim of promoting effective means of using space solutions to address regional and global challenges.

Ms. Anguiano Rodríguez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation considers it very timely that, on this occasion, the agenda item "Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space" (UNISPACE III) is being considered directly in the General Assembly in plenary meeting. This is a special moment, not only because five years have passed since the holding of the Conference and the adoption of the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", but also because we are approaching 2005, the year in which Member States must take stock of the degree to which the commitments we assumed at the Millennium Summit and at various United Nations conferences have been honoured.

The Government of Mexico fully concurs with the conclusion of the report of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) (A/59/174) that the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III is closely linked to the goals and objectives of the Millennium Summit, particularly the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, we believe that there are important synergies with the Plan of Implementation of the decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, with the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society and with other global initiatives.

The Government of Mexico attaches great importance to all initiatives aimed at promoting international cooperation in support of the peaceful uses of outer space. It is important that such cooperation take place both in the sphere of the application of science and space technologies to the benefit of humankind and of sustainable development — particularly in developing countries — and with regard to improving the legal framework that regulates the use of outer space. Mexico actively participated in the preparation of the COPUOS report. At the same time, we remain a member of five of the action teams established by the Committee, which are charged with ensuring the implementation of a substantial part of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

One of the teams in which Mexico participates is entrusted with implementing the recommendation to establish a global natural disaster management system — a subject to which my Government attaches great importance. In that regard, Mexico believes that the use of remote sensors and geo-space information systems are fundamental tools for preventing or mitigating natural disasters.

The regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations, are fundamental instruments in organizing activities to strengthen the capacity of developing countries in these areas. In the past year and a half, the Mexican Government has promoted the consolidation of the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, with

campuses in Brazil and in Mexico. The fifth meeting of the Centre's Governing Board, which is now presided over by Mexico, will take place at the end of this month, in São José dos Campos, Brazil.

Among our national initiatives, I wish to mention the National Telemedicine Programme, comprising areas of health and information and communication technologies. The programme addresses remote medical care through satellite-conveyed signals for audio, video and data.

Finally, in support of the advancement of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, my delegation is sponsoring draft resolution A/59/L.4, which the Assembly will consider today.

Mrs. Núñez de Odremán (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to express its view that outer space should be considered the common heritage of humankind, with respect to which no nation has or should have authority to claim subjective rights or to seek to create unilateral privileges. We are of the view that exclusively peaceful use should be made of outer space, and that outer space research and study should serve to support sustainable development.

The Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela provides in article 11 that

> "The Republic shall have rights in outer space above it and in areas that are or can be the common heritage of humankind, in accordance with the terms, extent and conditions provided for in international agreements and national legislation."

Our position is consistent with the humanistic ideology that drives the foreign policy of our Government, inspired by the principle of the sovereign equality of States. This prompts us once again to support the proposal made by China and the Russian Federation at the Conference on Disarmament to establish an international legal instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space and the use of space as a theatre of operations for war or a platform for the arms race.

Venezuela has a continuing commitment to the protection of outer space. We have signed three of the five United Nations treaties on this subject: the Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue Agreement and the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects. My country is also party to other international instruments relating to space, such as the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) Operating Agreement and the Convention of the International Telecommunication Union.

The Government of Venezuela has set in motion legal machinery to create a national aerospace agency, which we hope will begin its activities in the near future.

Our delegation also wishes to indicate that we greatly appreciate the efforts of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), and we trust that, by putting them in practice, we shall generate benefits for the developing countries and for humankind in general.

Finally, Venezuela reaffirms its commitment to the effective implementation of the Vienna Declaration aimed at promoting scientific cooperation and space technology and to sharing the benefits of the resources of outer space without discrimination of any kind.

The President *(spoke in French)*: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I call on the representative of Nigeria in connection with draft resolution A/59/L.4.

Mr. Wali (Nigeria): After further consultations with the sponsors of draft resolution A/59/L.4, I should like to make two revisions to the draft text. First, I should like to insert a paragraph following paragraph 13. The new paragraph will be numbered paragraph 14, and all subsequent paragraphs will be renumbered accordingly. The new paragraph reads as follows:

> "Requests the Committee to undertake further implementation of UNISPACE III recommendations, with a view to enhancing the capacity of the developing countries to initiate space application programmes".

Next, I should like to modify paragraph 19 — as newly numbered — to read as follows:

> "Agrees that the Committee should continue to consider in its future sessions, starting with its forty-eighth session, the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, until the

Committee considers that concrete results are achieved."

Continued support for the corrected and revised draft resolution, and its adoption without a vote, will be most appreciated.

Mr. Aninat (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Very briefly, I just want to support the revisions, which I have had the opportunity to discuss. I believe they significantly strengthen the draft resolution and give it an evolutionary character; in other words, the process does not end here; we also need to be aware that we must continue to give the international community an account of the important agreements achieved at the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its five-year review.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will take a decision on draft resolution A/59/L.4, as orally corrected and orally revised.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/59/L.4, as orally corrected and orally revised?

Draft resolution A/59/L.4, as orally corrected and orally revised, was adopted (resolution 59/2).

The President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 23?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform members that document A/INF/59/3/Rev.1, containing a revised programme of work and schedule of plenary meetings for the remainder of the main part of the fifty-ninth session, was issued this morning and has been distributed in the General Assembly Hall.

I would like to remind members that the lists of speakers are open for the items listed in document A/INF/59/3/Rev.1.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.